

Commission's Grant Application Form

Shelby County Board of Commissioners

GRANT APPLICATION

Legal Name of the Organization:	Memphis "Beat the Odds" Foundation
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EIN:	621855925
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Street Address of Organization	286 North Avalon, Memphis, TN 38112
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Office Phone:	901-428-0073
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E-mail	Okwumabuat@gmail.com
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

First Name	Theresa Montgomery
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Last Name	Okwumabua
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GENERAL CONTACT FOR THIS REQUEST(if other than Executive Director)

First Name	<i>Field not completed.</i>
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Last Name	<i>Field not completed.</i>
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Title:	<i>Field not completed.</i>
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DESCRIPTION OF GRANT REQUEST

Program/Project Area:	Education
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Amount Requested	\$5,000
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Total Organizational budget (for current year):	\$50,000
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Total Project/Program Budget: \$46,000

Dates covered by this budget: January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016

Project/Program Name: Memphis "Beat the Odds" Awards Program

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF ORGANIZATION

Please summarize in a short paragraph the purpose of your agency. Briefly explain why your agency is requesting this grant, what outcomes you hope to achieve, and how you will spend the funds if a grant is made.

The Memphis chapter of "Beat the Odds" was founded in 1994 by Dr. Theresa Montgomery Okwumabua. Similar to Marian Wright Edelman's Children's Defense Fund's nationally renowned "Beat the Odds" project, Memphis "Beat the Odds" focuses on the positive potential of youth. Since its inception, Memphis "Beat the Odds" has received strong support within the community, from local and national businesses, community faith-based organizations, and private citizens. As a result of this support, along with the work of diligent and committed volunteers, Memphis "Beat the Odds" (MBTO) has held an awards banquet to honor young people from the Memphis/Shelby County area that have beaten the odds for more than 22 years. Since 1996, MBTO has also given an award, named in honor of Cathryn Rivers Johnson, a noted Memphis educator and advocate for children, to an adult who has worked tirelessly on behalf of children and youth. For several years, MBTO operated under the auspices of Shelby County Government's Project RAP (Responsible Adolescent Parenting). However, in 2001, the Memphis "Beat the Odds" Foundation was established as a chartered not-for-profit corporation with 501 (c) (3) status. The Memphis "Beat the Odds" Foundation aims to provide a positive message about young people who have overcome tremendous adversity (poverty, violence, family break-up, illness, disabilities, death, cultural and language barriers). The program focuses on uplifting the human quality of life in our community by letting the community, particularly young people, know that they can beat the odds, too. The organization also aims to raise awareness regarding the pivotal role that adults and the community play in the lives of young people. It emphasizes that not one of the "odd beaters" did so without the support of, at least, one adult in their lives. The requested funds will be used to (1) offer a high profile awards program honoring local youth

who have faced some incredible odds and an adult, who has worked tirelessly on behalf of children and youth; (2) develop short videos, highlighting the circumstances and accomplishments of the honorees; (3) support the educational needs of the youth honorees and a youth serving organization of the adult honoree's choice; (4) conduct outreach activities, before and after the awards celebration targeting a broader audience of youth and informing them about overcoming adversity as well as the importance and power of giving back to the community through service (community service); (5) offer a Youth Forum featuring former 'Beat the Odds' recipients and others who have experienced significant hardship in their lives but found ways to overcome them, and (6) compile the inspirational stories of Memphis "Beat the Odds" award recipients into a document which will be shared with other youth and the broader community. There are several expected outcomes for the Memphis "Beat the Odds" program. First, we expect that young people, especially those faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges, will not only be honored and recognized but they will feel understood and supported. Secondly, we expect to inspire and motivate other youth so that they understand that they too can "beat the odds." Thirdly, we expect to raise awareness about the pivotal role that adults and the community play in the lives of children, especially for those facing adversity. In particular, we seek to demonstrate that behind each successful child is, at least, one caring adult. Through this realization, we expect to inspire community leaders and citizens to help children struggling to overcome adversity.

(Section Break)

Narrative - Organization

Current programs and accomplishments. Please emphasize the achievements of the recent past.

From its current structure, the Memphis "Beat the Odds" Awards banquet is the foundation's flagship event. As such, Memphis BTO has honored and recognized close to 120 youth and 22 adults for their accomplishments. In May (2016), it will sponsor its 23rd consecutive "Beat the Odds" Awards program. The only interruption in programming took place in 2010, when the organization sponsored a luncheon instead of its dinner themed awards program. To our knowledge there are only five (5) other "Beat the Odds" program events across the country (California, Washington, D.C., Texas, Minnesota, New York,

and Ohio). Only the Washington, D.C. program, if any, has operated longer than the Memphis “Beat the Odds” program. Until last year (2015), all of the programs were organized and implemented by volunteers from the community. Bursting at the seams to broaden our activities, programs, services and reach into the community, the foundation raised more than \$50,000 in 2016 and hired a part-time Director to manage the day-to-day operations of the foundation. We are looking to expand the hours of the Director from part-time to full-time within the next year. This individual will assist in following up and maintaining contact with former recipients who, at this point, are scattered across the world with an array of continued accomplishments. Our once “high risk” youth are excelling and reaching remarkable heights as physicians, teachers, education administrators (e.g., teachers). We hope to bring many of these high achievers back to Memphis for a Youth Forum as part of the 2016 Memphis “Beat the Odds” Awards Program. None of this would be possible without the continued support of our volunteer Board and Advisory Committee.

Numbers of paid full-time staff: 0

Number of paid part-time staff: 0

Number of volunteers: 30-50

(Section Break)

Narrative - Funding Request

Please describe the program/project for which you seek funding and include how it will benefit the general welfare of residents in Shelby County, TN.

As noted previously, The Memphis “Beat the Odds” Foundation is seeking funding to support a slate of activities and programs that it typically offers each year and several new ventures. Its typical activities, programs and services include (1) offering a high profile awards celebration in May of each year where six (6) local youth are honored for their accomplishments and an adult, who has worked tirelessly on behalf of children and youth, is recognized; (2) developing short videos, highlighting the circumstances and accomplishments of the honorees; and (3) supporting the educational needs of the youth honorees and a youth serving organization of the adult honorees choice; and (4) conducting outreach activities, before and after the awards celebration targeting a broader audience of youth and

informing them about overcoming adversity as well as the importance and power of giving back to the community through service (community service). Beyond our typical slate of activities, programs and services, we are seeking funds to expand the outreach and impact of the Memphis “Beat the Odds” program by (1) offering a Youth Forum featuring former ‘Beat the Odds’ recipients and others who have experienced significant hardship in their lives but found ways to overcome them, and (2) compiling for distribution to other youth and the broader community, the inspirational stories of Memphis “Beat the Odds” award recipients. To successfully implement these projects, the Memphis “Beat the Odds” Foundation proposes to use a portion of the funding to hire (part-time) staff support. All of its activities, programs and services will benefit the general welfare of residents in Shelby County, TN. as they promote the positive potential of youth. As noted above, not only do Memphis “Beat the Odds” activities, programs, and services honor, recognize, and celebrate young people who are “beating the odds” and finding success, despite facing some incredible odds in their lives, but it demonstrates that behind each successful young person is, at least, one caring adult. Furthermore, community leaders and citizens in Shelby County, TN are inspired to help struggling youth to overcome adversity.

General Operating Support																						
If applying for general operating support, briefly describe how this grant will be used.	<p>The Memphis “Beat the Odds” Foundation is requesting a total of \$21,450.00 from the Shelby County Commissioner’s Grant Program. As can be seen from perusal of the projected budget (see below), funding is requested to support general operating expenses, including those associated with the Telling Our Stories Project (i.e., compiling the stories of our former recipients into book form; \$7,500), offering the Youth Forum focused on overcoming barriers to success (\$5,000), educational outreach events (i.e., community service project, video workshop), and the 2016 awards program (e.g., facility, event catering, photographer, printing, videographer, decorations, complimentary tickets). Projected Expenses</p> <table><tr><td>Project Cost Request from County Commissioners Category</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>PERSONNEL Project Manager (Part-time)</td><td>\$7,500.00</td><td>\$0.00</td></tr><tr><td>OPERATING EXPENSES Facility Rental</td><td>\$1,500.00</td><td>\$500.00</td></tr><tr><td>Event Catering</td><td>\$4,000.00</td><td>\$1,500.00</td></tr><tr><td>Photographer</td><td>\$500.00</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Printing</td><td>\$3,000.00</td><td>\$1,500.00</td></tr><tr><td>Community Service</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Project Cost Request from County Commissioners Category			PERSONNEL Project Manager (Part-time)	\$7,500.00	\$0.00	OPERATING EXPENSES Facility Rental	\$1,500.00	\$500.00	Event Catering	\$4,000.00	\$1,500.00	Photographer	\$500.00		Printing	\$3,000.00	\$1,500.00	Community Service		
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Project \$2,500.00 \$500.00 Videographer \$2,500.00 \$1,000.00
 Decorations \$500.00 \$300.00 Telling Our Stories Project
 \$10,000.00 \$7,500.00 Youth Forum \$5,000.00 \$5,000.00
 MISCELLANEOUS Award Recipients Scholarships (n=6@
 \$1250) \$7500.00 \$1,500.00 Award Trophies (n=7) \$2,000.00
 \$1,000.00 Complimentary Tickets \$1,000.00 \$1,000.00 TOTAL
 \$47,500.00 \$21,450.00

Project Support

Please explain the specific project including a statement of its primary purpose and the need or problem that you are seeking to address.

In general, the activities and projects for which we are seeking funding are part of the Memphis “Beat the Odds” Foundation’s efforts to honor and recognize local youth for their achievement. There are three (3) activities for which we are seeking funding: Activity/Project #1: The Memphis “Beat the Odds” Awards program has been our flagship program. This event is usually conducted in the Spring of each year. At the event, we typically honor six (6) local youth for their accomplishments, despite facing tremendous obstacles in their life and one (1) adult who has worked tirelessly on behalf of children and youth. We are requesting funds to pay for the facility, event catering, photographer, awards, program development and printing, event documentation, and decorations. We are also asking for funds to offer complimentary tickets so that youth and young adults who cannot afford to attend the event might do so. Activity/Project #2: The Telling Our Stories project involves an effort to document the stories of our recipients. We are planning to find as many of our former award recipients as is possible, to update their stories, and to feature some of the most useful ones into book format for distribution and sharing with others in our community, especially with youth. Activity/Project #3: The Youth Forum will utilize a conference format to expose young people to the elements of success. We hope to involve former recipients of the Memphis “Beat the Odds” Awards in the forum. Not only will they share their stories at the time of the award but information about how they were able to continue overcoming obstacles in their lives. We will either take the forum to students or convene the conference in one site and invite individuals from the community to participate. Collectively, these projects are intended to bring positive light on youth. Too often, we are bombarded with news about youth engaged in non-productive, life threatening activities. Not only will the community hear about the positive potential of youth

but they will receive a strong message about the importance of adults and the community being involved in the lives of children and youth.

How does the project contribute to your organization's overall mission?

As noted previously, the mission of the Memphis “Beat the Odds” Foundation is to provide a positive message about young people who have overcome tremendous adversity (poverty, violence, family break- up, illness, developmental disabilities, death of parents, cultural and language barriers), demonstrated academic excellence or improvement, and given back to the community. To this end, all of the activities, programs and services we are requesting funding to support, are designed to uplift the human quality of life in our community by letting the community, particularly young people, know that they can beat the odds, regardless of the obstacles. The organization goal of raising awareness about the pivotal role that adults and the community play in the lives of young people is achieved through brining attention to the work of a specific adult during the award celebration. However, that message is heard by adults who nominate youth for the award, provide references, and come to share the celebration with selected youth. This also happens for youth who may not be selected as awardees as they take part in the nomination process, at community service events that all nominees are invited to and at the awards dinner, which they are also invited to attend. Finally, Memphis “Beat the Odds” mission is achieved when we make clear in our messaging and programming that it takes adults to help young people achieve their goals---to overcome obstacles in their lives. Sending this message serves as a catalysts for additional community efforts on behalf of children.

(Section Break)

Narrative - Evaluation

Please explain how you will measure the effectiveness of your activities. Describe your criteria for a successful program and the results you expect to have achieved by the end of the funding period.

Each year, following the Annual Awards Program, members of our Advisory Committee participate in a professionally conducted Debrief Session during which the process and outcomes of the event are discussed and evaluated. A similar approach will be used this year to determine the effectiveness of our activities. We are also considering conducting a focus group with the community to assess their thoughts and perceptions of the program. Short questionnaires may also be used to get feedback from other segments of the community. We are working with a local evaluator in this regard.

Attachments:

If your request is under \$25,000 please attach the following:

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1. Copy of the entity's 501 (c) 3 certificate for charitable organizations or 501 (c) 4 certificate for civic organizations
 2. Most recent IRS Form 990 or Financial Statements (balance sheet and income statement) as of the most recent fiscal year end certified by Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer of the entity.
 3. Complete Budget for grant request

If your request is \$25,000 or more please attach the following:

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1. Copy of the entity's 501 (c) 3 certificate for charitable organizations or 501 (c) 4 certificate for civic organizations
 2. Copy of an annual audit as of a date within 18 months of the start of the current fiscal year.
 3. Complete Budget for grant request

File 1 [Memphis Beat the Odds 501 certificate.pdf](#)

File 2 [Form 990-N IRS Status.pdf](#)

File 3 [Memphis Beat the Odds Budget 2016 Rervised 2.pdf](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Read, and if you agree to the provisions, sign the following:

The information provided has been submitted in good faith and as completely as our records and recollections permit.

I understand that the information provided in this application shall be open to

inspection upon filing with the office of the Shelby County Board of Commissioners.

Signature:	Theresa M. Okwumabua
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Printed Name:	Theresa M. Okwumabua
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Date	6/6/2016
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